



EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT NEWS
The Monthly Electronic Newsletter of
Homeland Security and Emergency Management
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Christopher M. Pope, Director of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, and James Gallagher, Chief Engineer of the DES Water Division, on *The Exchange with Laura Kroy* on N.H. Public Radio on March 6th to discuss the possibility of spring flooding in New Hampshire and what the state is doing to get ready and encourage others to prepare.
(N.H. Department of Safety photo)

NEWS MEDIA STEP FORWARD WITH FLOOD MESSAGE - The state's news organizations are willing and able partners when it comes to spreading the word about possible flood disasters. With this season's record snow pack and memories of the three recent floods still fresh, the media helped to spread the word on potential flooding and what families, businesses and local communities should be doing to prepare. News organizations gave excellent coverage to potential flooding, including information on how to obtain flood insurance and preparations by state and local government. Many news organizations carried special reports and sections on the flooding potential, in addition to general coverage.

Stories on the possibility of spring flooding and steps being taken to prepare have appeared on WMUR-TV, N.H. Public Radio, the Associated Press and most of the state's daily newspapers.

FLOODING POTENTIAL HIGH WITH SPRING RUNOFF – It's not really possible to predict whether flooding will occur this year, but the probability is certainly high compared to previous years. The state has received double the normal amount of snow, more than 100 inches measured at Concord, as compared to the normal 50 inches, and that snow pack has a high moisture content. The State Department of Environmental Services, which measures the snow pack, says there is the equivalent of about two months of normal rainfall on the ground in southern New Hampshire and up to four months in the North Country. Average rainfall in the state is about 3 ½ inches per month. A sudden thaw, heavy rain or some combination could trigger flooding.

GOVERNOR HOSTS CONFERENCE CALL FOR LOCAL EMDS – Governor Lynch had a conference call with about 50 local emergency management directors on March 13th, urging them to prepare for potential flooding in their communities. The Governor reminded the local officials that this year's heavy snow pack means that several months worth of normal rainfall is contained in the snow and a sudden thaw or heavy rain could produce flooding. He told them that the state will do everything it can to assist cities and towns with supplies and services, but reminded them that they are on the front line and need to ensure that their communities are prepared. In addition to reviewing emergency plans and stockpiling supplies, the Governor urged the EMDs to ensure that culverts and storm drains are cleared and to pay special attention to areas that have flooded in the past.

Governor Lynch also led a meeting of state officials in the state EOC on March 14th. The governor stressed the importance of a coordinated state response to any flooding that might occur. He, HSEM Director Chris Pope and other state officials are also meeting with local officials in communities with a history of flooding to discuss preparedness measures. Those meetings will continue through the end of the month.

FLOOD INSURANCE PROVIDES PROTECTION TO HOMES – HSEM and FEMA strongly encourage New Hampshire residential and business property owners and renters to help protect themselves against property losses during floods. New Hampshire suffered three catastrophic floods between October 2005 and April of last year. As spring approaches this year, with record snow still on the ground, the chances of flooding this year are high. The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) is a federal program, but the insurance coverage is purchased from private insurance agents. The only requirement to be eligible for flood insurance is that an insured property be located in a community that participates in NFIP. Currently, about 200 New Hampshire communities are in the program and another seven are planning to join. There is a 30-day waiting period after signing up until the coverage kicks in.

The average cost of \$100,000 of flood insurance in New England is about \$800. Buildings do not need to be located in special flood hazard zones to qualify. For more information about flood insurance and the NFIP, go to www.floodsmart.gov. To purchase flood insurance or find an agent, call 1-800-427-2419.

STUDY SHOWS FLOODS CAUSED BY HEAVY RAIN, NOT DAMS – Preliminary results of an engineering study of the May 2006 and April 2007 floods in New Hampshire show that heavy, steady rain was the culprit, not dams. Some residents of areas near rivers had charged that rainfall alone couldn't account for the rapid rise of river levels and accused dam operators of contributing to the problem. The preliminary results, released at a public meeting in Bedford on March 18th, showed that hydropower dams in Greenville and Wilton were not to blame for flooding in that area. Dam experts say most of New Hampshire's 3,100 dams are too small to have much effect on flooding. Only the flood control dams operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers can help prevent or slow flooding.

Final results of the \$330,000 study will be released in May.

VY EXERCISE GETS GOOD GRADES – The New Hampshire portion of the 2007 Vermont Yankee exercise sequence got high marks from federal evaluators. The Federal Emergency Management Agency's report on the October 17th graded exercise listed no deficiencies or ARCAs (Areas Requiring Corrective Action) for any of the 170 evaluated procedures carried out by New Hampshire local or state participants. It was the first VY exercise with no deficiencies or ARCAs for New Hampshire. Officials from the five VY Emergency Planning Zone towns and representatives from state agencies and other participants received certificates of appreciation from HSEM at a VY meeting on March 5th.

WEBSITE ENLISTS HEALTH PROFESSIONALS FOR DISASTER SERVICE – Dr. Susan E. Lynch, New Hampshire's first lady and a pediatrician, became the first health care professional to register on line for volunteer disaster service. At a State House news conference on March 4th, Dr. Lynch and her husband, Gov. John Lynch, officially kicked off the project, called icanhelp.nh.gov. This is New Hampshire's version of the national Emergency System for Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals, or ESAR-VHP, program. It is a database of healthcare professional in all disciplines who are willing to volunteer their services during disasters.

DELEGATION FROM UZBEKISTAN VISITS NEW HAMPSHIRE – A delegation of 10 emergency management officials from the former Soviet Republic of Uzbekistan is visiting New Hampshire this week (March 23rd – 29th) as part of the Partners for Peace program. The delegation is touring U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, N.H. Department of Safety, National Guard and Manchester Fire Department facilities and talking with their counterparts here.

Partners for Peace is a U.S. Department of Defense program aimed at helping former republics of the Soviet Union build to democratic institutions.